

May 10, 2011  
RAC Meeting Minutes  
Peery Hotel  
Salt Lake City, UT

RAC members in attendance: Bill Hopkin, Frank White, Fran Amendola, Bryan Harris, Lowell Braxton, Ray Bloxham, Stu Sprouse, Jim Allison, Chuck Hawley, John Malechek, Ted Zimmerman, Dell LeFevre

RAC members not in attendance: John Harja

BLM employees in attendance: Juan Palma, Sherry Foot, Jill Silvey, Cindy Ledbetter, Blake Klinkner, Glenn Carpenter, Aaron Curtis, Verlin Smith

Members of the public: Larry Jensen (Solicitor's Office), Jim Catlin (Wild Utah Project), John Ruple (Univ of Utah); Rory Reynolds (DNR)

Welcome and introductions were given.

**Elections of officers:** Lowell Braxton, Chairman (Bill H. made motion, Dell L. seconded); Bill Hopkin, Vice Chairman (John M. made motion, Stu S. seconded)

**RAC Procedures/Overview:** Powerpoint presentation given (can provide copy upon request)

**What's Happening in Utah (Juan Palma)**

Renewable Energy: Solar – BLM manages 22 million acres of public lands with solar potential in 6 states – AZ, CA, CO, NV, NM and Utah. Between the end of FY 08 and 08, the number of solar applications more than doubled, from 96-211. Today, there are 147 solar applications pending. Of those, 104, comprising of 1 million acres, are “first-in-line” applications. The remaining applications describe land previously applied for by a different company. In 2009, the BLM identified 14 solar fast-track projects that could be approved by the end of 2010. Eight of these projects, have been approved.

Wind – BLM manages 20.6 million acres of public lands with wind potential in 11 western states. BLM has approved 29 wind development projects with an installed capacity of 437 megawatts. BLM has identified 7 wind fast-track projects that could be approved by the end of 2010.

Geothermal – BLM has delegated authority for leasing 249 million acres of public lands with geothermal potential, including over 100 million acres of FS lands. At the end of FY 09, the BLM managed 666 geothermal leases covering over 1.2 million acres. There are 35 geothermal power plants that use Federal resources in CA, NV, and have a total net capacity of 1300 megawatts (MW) and supply the power needs of about 1.3 million homes. BLM has identified 6 geothermal fast-track projects that could be approved by the end of 2010.

Biomass – Biomass collected on DOI lands is exclusively derived from organic matter and can be used to produce heat, electric power, transportation fuel or many other products. The DOI currently offers nearly 600,000 tons of wood biomass to local markets each year. The kinds of biomass produced include small-diameter trees and shrubs, chips, tree harvest debris, non-commercial tree species, grasses and aquatic and terrestrial plant residues. Biomass provides more than 3 quadrillion British thermal units (Btu) of energy annually. As of 2008, biomass was the source of 53% of all U.S. renewable energy, or nearly 4% of the total energy produced in the U.S.

There will be an Oil and Gas Lease Sale on May 24.

Application for Permit to Drill (APD) process – must be in the forefront.

Master Leasing Plans (MLPs) - A stepped-down leasing analysis –

Analyze in greater detail than the RMP the impacts of leasing and likely development.

Identify key issues such as protection of air quality, watersheds, wilderness, wildlife, and nearby land uses.

Identify appropriate leasing and higher-level development mitigation measures to protect the environment.

Seventeen proposals, consisting of 2.9 million acres, were considered. Ultimately, five areas: Vernal, San Rafael MLP, Monticello, bottom of the Bookcliffs (Cisco Desert), and Moab (analysis of potash will be included). The first two MLPs to be initiated will be Moab and Vernal -- No leasing parcels until MLPs are finished; State Office will do components and contract out some of the components. An EIS may be necessary for some; however, EAs may be sufficient.

Air Quality – The biggest issue we face within the Wasatch Front and the Uinta Basin. We are finding a significant ozone problem in the winter (through air monitoring) in the Uinta Basin. Air Resource Management Strategy – we’ve developed this to address this problem. We are interested in the capabilities of the universities for air quality research. There are timing concerns regarding studies and when we can get that data. There is a meeting on May 13 to talk about air quality, hosted by Congressman Matheson. There are other projects in the Uintah Basin to approve about 4,000 new wells by the end of the year. Rock House Project – compromise reached.

Sage Grouse – The State continues work on their Guidelines and Practices for Development Activity Within Utah Sage-Grouse Habitat, that would be integrated into the overall State of Utah Sage Grouse Strategy, which would be integrated in the Utah Greater Sage-grouse Management Plan 2009 as a stand-alone appendix. There are approximately 15,000 Greater Sage-grouse on BLM lands and 100 Gunnison Sage Grouse.

Recreation – A lot of recreational activity in Utah. We need to continue to improve our campgrounds and facilities. We need to try and connect urban to public lands. America’s Great

Outdoors (AGO) Initiative – Deputy Secretary David Hayes will be in SLC on May 19 to give a presentation on the findings of the previous AGO meetings. The RAC asked if there would be a possibility of having the RecRAC (which is the parent RAC) meet with Mr. Hayes. State Director will follow up on the request.

ROWS – Mona to Oquirrh Transmission Line – there will be a ground-breaking ceremony on May 20 with the Governor. Magnum Project (outside Delta) – four large caverns that stores natural gas. Leased about 126,000 acres of potash on Sevier Dry Lake (Millard County) – totaling \$20 million. South Gateway Project – transmission line from Wyoming to Mona.

RAC members had concerns about how to staff all of these projects. SD comments: the right skills are needed, how could we involve the youth and interns, budget is a dilemma, we need to rely on partnerships, and we need to remain focused (on the economy and environment).

West Tavaputs Agreement – New innovations with Bill Barrett Corporation. Economic development of the West Tav area is allowed to move forward because of the agreements reached between the O/G operator and the environmental community.

Lawsuits (concerns) – We need to sit down with all of the principles at the front end. BLM needs to listen. Try to resolve components and reach agreements and compromise. RAC could help (possibly utilizing a subgroup). Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) is a good tool – instead of arbitration (with BLM doesn't use).

Archaeology and BLM Southern Utah – Has been a dilemma. BLM is working on funding for the museum in Blanding. We are working on providing artifacts to the museum, tribes and to the schools to share and educate the students.

RecRAC – Glenn Carpenter gave an update on the Little Sahara Recreation Area fee increases. Some of the public complained but overall the public is having a good experience. Additional infrastructures and facilities have been built and updated. Financially – may be in the black this year.

**Rich County Project (Three Creeks Allotment)– Subgroup Report (Bill Hopkin)** – this spring they are going to look at the landscape re: recreation community. A video is being made on the project. Status – proponents have sent the Salt Lake Field Office and the FS proposals and NEPA and scoping will happen within the next few months.

From the last meeting, the RAC was to vote in support of the report. Bill felt that this may not be appropriate at this time. Bill suggested taking the full committee on a site tour of the project. A motion was made by Stu Sprouse to suspend the vote in support of the project in lieu of a possible field tour. Fran Amendola seconded. Further discussion will continue at close of business meeting.

**Utah Partners for conservation and Development (UPCD) – Rory Reynolds (DNR)** – Juan is now the new chair of UPCD. UPCD is a partnership which leverages the resources that we have. There are 5 locally-lead teams around the state. Anyone can submit projects. Chaining projects

are being done on State and private lands—some on BLM lands. Nearly \$700,000 has been spent this year. Most of the work is contracted out. DWR participates and provides recommendations on all of the projects. Water quality issues are tied to DEQ (as they do the monitoring). BLM is a major partner.

**Public Comments:** Jim Catlin, Wild Utah Project – Talked about the Rangeland Health Standards and Guides. Where are we today? Experimenting with new range practices. The State is involved in reviewing new protocol for range monitoring. Recommends that this be an activity for the RAC. Consider a Technical Review Team (TRT) be established. Jim could help the RAC get involved. Considerations – 1) Consider special projects (statewide protocol range monitoring; 2) Should there be a TRT?

**Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA) Refresher, Aaron Curtis/Lisa Machnik (for Carol Ryan):** Powerpoint presentation (upon request). RAC comment – the BLM/FS needs to market better what we do.

**Wild Lands (Juan Palma) (for Don Banks):** FY 2011 appropriations language precludes BLM from taking actions regarding Secretarial Order 3310. Policy is under review at the Department and additional information is expected in the near future.

**State Director Projects (Juan Palma):** The state director presented projects that the RAC could pursue for the future (not in any particular order). He also asked for feedback from the RAC:

1. Cedar City RMP or Travel Management Plan – Provide counsel. Letters of recommendation
2. Statewide Travel Management Plan – RAC to look at draft policy copy of Instruction Memorandum (IM)
3. Connecting urban Utah to BLM lands – What is out there?
4. Renewable Energy
5. Recreation in Utah
6. Youth Employment (BLM Utah) – What might we do – project involvement of youth
7. Washington County and/or other counties' plans
8. Wild Horse Program – privatizing? What do we have in Utah?
9. Relationships with citizens of southern Utah
10. Statewide protocol for range monitoring – TRTs – BLM staff to present pros/cons
11. Air Quality – Resource Development – Report from State Director (BLM staff)

Possible Field Tours:

Deseret Land and Livestock (DLL) – Rich County Project (Three Creeks Allotment)

Uinta Basin – Oil and Gas

Southern Utah

The state director prioritized the projects that he felt the RAC could begin working on and to report back at the next RAC meeting:

- 1) A presentation on Air Quality from BLM staff
- 2) A presentation on the grazing/range monitoring concept from BLM staff (pros/cons)

- 3) A subgroup was formed to review the draft IM on the statewide travel management plan. Members of group are: Ray Bloxham (chairman), Jim Allison, Dell LeFevre, Bryan Harris, and Fran Amendola. The group will be tasked with finding the “pitfalls” of the IM and bringing their results to the RAC at the next meeting. State Director will provide the draft IM to the subgroup.
- 4) The RAC will be working on Tasks 1, 2 and 5.

**Next meeting date/location:** August 4-5, 2011. August 4, field tour of the DLL. RAC will tour the Rich County (Three Creeks Allotment) (ref: Rich County Allotment Subgroup Report) on DLL. August 5, business meeting. Location: Ogden, UT (logistical info forthcoming). RAC will vote on the findings from the Rich County Allotment subgroup’s report; presentations on grazing/range monitoring (pros/cons) and air quality; and a report from the Travel Management Plan IM subgroup.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_s//Lowell Braxton\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_5-17-11\_\_\_\_\_

Lowell Braxton, Chairman